

REMARKS

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 3-11, 13-35 and 41-45 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 13, 18, 30 and 41 are the independent claims.

Claims 19 and 31 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Claims 1, 7, 10, 11, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 27, 28, 30, 32 and 41 have been amended. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 1, 3-11, 13-17 and 31-33 contain allowable subject matter.

II. THE OBJECTION TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 7, 10, 11 and 16 stand objected to because of minor informalities regarding their dependency. Applicants have amended claims 7, 10, 11 and 16 to correct their dependency as noted by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 7, 10, 11 and 16 be withdrawn.

III. THE REJECTION OF CLAIMS 18, 22-23, 30 AND 35 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER U.S. PATENT NO. 5,761,311 TO SPELMAN IN VIEW OF U.S. PATENT NO. 6,011,849 TO ORRIN.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited by the Examiner at page 15 of the Office Action and to incorporate some of the subject matter of dependent claim 19.

Spelman fails to teach or suggest the features recited in independent claim 18, as amended, and Orrin fails to cure the deficiencies of Spelman.

Accordingly, claim 18 is now in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn because neither Spelman nor Orrin, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest

each feature of independent claim 18, as amended.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully assert that dependent claims 22-23 are allowable at least because of their dependence from claim 18, and the reasons set forth above.

Independent claim 30 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 31.

Accordingly, Applicants believe that claim 30 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully assert that the rejection of claim 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn because neither Spelman nor Orrin, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 30, as amended.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully assert that dependent claim 35 is allowable at least because of its dependence from claim 30, and the reasons set forth above.

IV. THE REJECTION OF CLAIMS 19, 24-29 AND 41-45 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER SPELMAN IN VIEW OF ORRIN AND FURTHER IN VIEW OF U.S. PATENT NO. 5,345,408 TO LYNN.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 19 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Accordingly the rejection of claim 19 is moot.

Claims 24-29 depend from independent claim 18 and independent claim 18 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner at page 15 of the Office Action.

Accordingly, as noted above, neither Spelman nor Orrin, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 18, as amended, and Lynn fails to cure the deficiencies of Spelman and Orrin.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claims 24-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because neither Spelman nor Orrin, nor Lynn, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 18, as amended, upon which claims 24-29 depend.

Independent claim 41 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter indicated by the Examiner at page 15 of the Office Action.

Neither Spelman nor Orrin, nor Lynn, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 41, as amended.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claim 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because neither Spelman, nor Orrin, nor Lynn, whether taken singly or combined, teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 41.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully assert that dependent claims 42-45 are allowable at least because of their dependence from claim 41, and the reasons set forth above.

V. THE REJECTION OF CLAIM 20 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER SPELMAN IN VIEW OF ORRIN AND LYNN AND FURTHER IN VIEW OF U.S. PATENT NO. 5,588,061 TO GANESAN

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reason.

Claim 20, as amended, depends from claim 18 and claim 18 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited by the Examiner at page 15 of the Office Action.

As noted above, neither Spelman, nor Orrin, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest each of the features of independent claim 18, as amended.

Lynn and/or Ganesan fail to cure the deficiencies of Spelman and Orrin.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because neither Spelman, nor Orrin, nor Lynn, nor Ganesan, whether taken singly or combined, teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 18, upon which claim 20 depends.

VI. THE REJECTION OF CLAIM 21 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER SPELMAN IN VIEW OF ORRIN AND LYNN AND FURTHER IN VIEW OF U.S. PATENT NO. 5,787,173 TO SEHEIDT

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reason.

Claim 21, as amended, depends from claim 18 and claim 18 has been amended

to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited by the Examiner at page 15 of the Office Action.

As noted above, neither Spelman, nor Orrin, whether taken singly or combined, teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 18, as amended.

Lynn and/or Seheideit fail to cure the deficiencies of Spelmam and Orrin.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because neither Spelman, nor Orrin, nor Lynn, nor Seheideit, whether taken singly or combined teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 18, upon which claim 21 depends.

VII. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. And further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited and possibly concluded by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss any such remaining issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

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